

LaVern Baker – Soul on Fire (1991)

Written by bluesever

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|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 01. <i>Soul On Fire</i> play | 02. <i>Tomorrow Night</i> |
| 03. <i>Tweedle Dee</i> | 04. <i>That's All I Need</i> |
| 05. <i>Bop-Ting-A-Ling</i> | 06. <i>Play It Fair</i> |
| 07. <i>Jim Dandy</i> | 08. <i>My Happiness Forever</i> |
| 09. <i>Get Up, Get Up</i> | 10. <i>Still</i> |
| 11. <i>I Can't Love You Enough</i> | 12. <i>Jim Dandy Got</i> |
| 13. <i>I Cried A Tear</i> | 14. <i>Whipper</i> |
| 15. <i>I Waited Too Long</i> | 16. |
| 17. <i>How Often</i> | |
| 18. <i>You Said</i> | 19. <i>Saved</i> |
| 20. <i>See See Rider</i> | play |

One of R&B's earliest divas, LaVern Baker could grab hold of a song and belt it out with the best of them, whether she was singing bouncy, up-tempo rock & roll or bluesy torch ballads. Baker's contributions to the rockin' and rollin' wing of '50s R&B were in a class with Atlantic labelmates Ruth Brown and the Clyde McPhatter-era Drifters, as the stellar 20-track compilation *Soul on Fire: The Best of LaVern Baker* proves. Baker had a muscular delivery and a commanding personality on record, so much so that her ravishing visual appeal wasn't even necessary (though it certainly didn't hurt). Here she bellows and growls her way through rock & roll standards like "Tweedlee Dee" (her first big hit), the oft-covered "Jim Dandy" (her only R&B chart-topper), and "See See Rider," not to mention Leiber & Stoller's gospel pastiche "Saved." But Baker was equally powerful on her slow numbers, turning in positively smoldering performances on the classics "Soul on Fire," "Play It Fair," "I Cried a Tear" (her biggest pop hit), and "I Waited Too Long," among others. Baker isn't as much of a household name as she probably ought to be, but *Soul on Fire* is required listening for anyone interested in the first waves of R&B and rock & roll. ---Steve Huey, allmusic.com

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